



# **PRESS RELEASE**

## **House Armed Services Committee**

### **Floyd D. Spence, Chairman**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
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#### **OPENING STATEMENT OF THE HONORABLE FLOYD SPENCE**

#### **FULL COMMITTEE MARKUP OF H.R. 1401 FY 2000 DOD AUTHORIZATION BILL**

Today the committee marks up H.R. 1401, the FY 2000 Defense Authorization Bill. The bill is the product of months of hard work on the part of the committee. We received the President's budget in early February and have conducted dozens of hearings over the past several months in order to put us in a position to be able to mark up this bill today.

This year marks the fourth year out of the last five in which Congress has used the Budget Resolution to increase the President's defense budget. And while Congress did not increase defense spending in the Budget Resolution last year, we did pass a large defense supplemental last fall as part of the omnibus supplemental bill. And just yesterday, the House once again passed a large defense supplemental.

The first obvious truth is that the Administration continues to underfund defense. The second, is that while Congress has added close to \$50 billion dollars to the President's defense budget requests over the past five years, quality of life, readiness and modernization shortfalls continue to worsen.

The Budget Resolution calls for, and this bill recommends, an additional \$8.3 billion dollars in defense spending for next fiscal year. When you also consider that the Kosovo supplemental contains \$1.8 billion in FY 2000 pay and retirement related costs, this bill effectively adds more than \$10 billion dollars to the President's defense budget request.

While such an add will cover a large percentage of the FY 2000 shortfalls identified by the Chiefs earlier this year, it will not cover them all. And while we had all hoped earlier this year that this bill might

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halt the decline, the short and long-term impact of the war in Kosovo unfortunately means that even “treading water” with regards to declining quality of life, readiness and modernization trends will be difficult.

Congress is therefore left to struggle with managing growing risk instead of actually revitalizing our nation’s military. Despite all of our frustrations with mounting shortfalls, the committee’s efforts have once again focused on improving quality of life, trying to ensure minimal readiness and pushing ahead with badly needed modernization. The committee’s bipartisan focus on these problems has characterized the work of each subcommittee and panel.

Accordingly, I want to first thank my friend and colleague from Missouri, the committee’s Ranking Democrat, for his support and hard work on this bill as well as on behalf of the men and woman in uniform.

I would also like to thank the Subcommittee and Panel Chairmen and Ranking Members for their hard work and bipartisan approach to problems. It is your effort that allows us to be here today, putting together the pieces of what is an excellent defense authorization bill.

Finally, let me thank the staff. Hard working is an understatement and without them, we would not be here today.

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